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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3112  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1511  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1153  
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RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7627  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 8120  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000284

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [EAGR](#) [IN](#)  
SUBJECT: DELHI DIARY, FEBRUARY 3-13, 2009

REF: CHENNAI 0025

¶1. (U) Below is a compilation of political highlights from Embassy New Delhi for February 2-13, 2009, that did not feature in our other reporting:

- Valentine's Day Violence?
- Six-year-old's Beating Caught on Tape in UP
- Vajpayee Hospitalized, Making Steady Progress

Valentine's Day Violence?  
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¶2. (U) The GOI has asked states to remain vigilant and keep a watch over individuals who may attempt to cause disorder on Valentine's Day. The Home Ministry's Minister of State Sripakash Jaiswal told reporters on February 6, "The states will be asked to keep a special watch on the law and order situation on Valentine's Day." However, the Home Ministry has decided against issuing formal advisories to the states. The Center's concerns come in the wake of attacks by the self-styled, right-wing Hindu outfit the Sri Ram Sene (Reftel) at a Mangalore pub on January 24, and its leader Pramod Muthalik's threats to "marry off" couples who are seen dating in public on February 14. The Bajrang Dal, another Hindu extremist organization, has also threatened to disrupt Valentine's Day celebrations in cities throughout India. The Sri Ram Sene has no formal connection to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sena (RSS), both of which have condemned the Sri Ram Sene activities. However, some expelled RSS members are leading the Sene.

¶3. (U) The Hindustan Times reported that a group of Indian friends on Facebook have created "The Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women" in the wake of the Mangalore pub attacks. With over 3,000 members, the group has mushroomed into a full-fledged campaign to send Sri Ram Sene members pink "chaddis" (underwear) on Valentine's Day. According to the Times, the women decided to hit back at the right-wing groups who were capitalizing on fear. The Consortium has created a stir, and people from all parts of the country are enthusiastically joining the campaign as their way of showing contempt for the Sri Ram Sene's brutish behavior. The group plans to display the collected chaddis

at a press conference in Bengaluru on February 13.

14. (SBU) In past years, members of the Shiv Sena, a Hindu nationalist party in Maharashtra, have also vandalized greeting card stores selling Valentine's Day cards and cafes where young people, especially couples, congregate. Although the holiday is not well-known by India's overwhelming masses, India's urban and economically well-off youth increasingly celebrate this American holiday. As India grows economically and integrates into the global village, such tensions between modernity and those who believe they are protecting traditional Indian values will continue to occur. Furthermore, such tensions are likely to be exploited by political parties in the run-up to Indian national elections.

#### Six-year-old's Beating Caught on Tape in UP

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15. (U) On February 3, Komal, a six-year-old Dalit from the Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh was beaten by local police for stealing 280 rupees (USD 5.80). The incident garnered widespread media attention, as news channels broadcasted video of the beating by Senior Sub-Inspector Shyamlal Yadav. Six other policemen stood by as mute spectators. After Komal's mother claimed her daughter's innocence, the police admitted the charges against Komal were baseless and later withdrawn. In the wake of public criticism, six policemen were charged for torture of a minor under the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes Act. An inquiry into the incident has been ordered and a case against Yadav has been filed.

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16. (SBU) The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) told national press that this incident represents "the crying need for a special and separate police station unit for each district specially trained for handling children." Shanta Sinha, NCPCR Chairperson told us that these officers should be "prosecuted in criminal court," which would serve as an example to society to ensure that such incidents do not occur in the future. Renuka Chaudhury, Union Minister for Women and Child Development, condemned the incident and questioned the role of UP Chief Minister Mayawati, herself a Dalit, particularly her record on maintaining law and order, and protecting the rights of women, children and Dalits.

#### Vajpayee Hospitalized, Making Steady Progress

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17. (U) Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 85, is making steady progress after contracting a lower respiratory tract infection over one week ago. He was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) ICU on February 3, and was later found to be suffering from pneumonia. The BJP national executive, which held a meeting in Nagpur last week, expressed concern for the party veteran and wished for his fast recovery. Leaders from across the political spectrum sent their good wishes, with some like Sonia Gandhi and L.K. Advani visiting the hospital to inquire about his health. The wide media interest in and popular concern about Vajpayee's health reflects the respect with which he is widely regarded by Indians across caste and class lines.

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